--- 1/20th Pound - "Series of 1886" - 3rd BABN Contract (1878-1886) ---

--- *recess printed* BLACK plate proofs on light cardboard - 21 x 28 mm. ---

--- scanned at 200% scale - inscribed [THREE POUNDS / PER M OR / UNDER] ---

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The standard weight for *small cigarettes* at this time was 2½ pounds per thousand. If 2½ pounds came to 1000 cigarettes, then 1/20th pound equalled (1000 ÷ 2.5) ÷ 20 = twenty cigarettes.

In 1885, the tax on "foreign leaf" cigarettes, in packages of 1/20th pound or more, was 20¢ per pound, while "domestic leaf" cigarettes were taxed at 5¢ per pound.

The catalogue lists **RC-96** as from 1888, and subsequent to **RC-92**. I feel that this is incorrect. They are inscribed **"THREE POUNDS / PER M OR / UNDER"** (which logically follows from the "Series of 1880" Type III strip, which was inscribed with "NOT MORE THAN 1/20 lb"). I think that **RC-96** is from 1886, and was recorded by John McKay under the **3rd BABN Contract** - see below:

John McKay records the 'delivery' of 25,000 *lithographed* copies of the "1-20, Black, Square, Cigarettes" under the **3rd BABN Contract** (1878-1886). The collection ***does not include*** a *lithographed* copy of **RC-96(L)**.

John McKay records the 'delivery' of 120,000 *recess printed* copies of the "1-20, Black, Cigarettes" under the **4th BABN Contract** (1886-1892). These appear to be **RC-88**.

The latter total of 120,000 stamps seems to include only **RC-88**. To date, no *lithographed* copies of the black 1/20th pound **RC-96(L)** inscribed "THREE POUNDS PER M OR UNDER" have been found.

Judging by the many surplus extant sheets of **RC-85(L)** I feel that the catalogue listing is reversed, and that **RC-85(L)** should come from 1888, while **RC-96** (inscribed **THREE POUNDS / PER M OR / UNDER**) should be listed as dating from 1886.

★**RC-96 P** - 1/20th pound, *recess printed*, black plate or die proof on light cardboard

★**RC-96 P / CP** - 1/20th pound, black plate or die proof on light cardboard, stamped **CANCELLED** in 3 mm. violet Gothic

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File path is [c:\ CR - STAMPS \ RC_STAMPS \ 1886\ 1-20th black],
In MS Word 2007 for Windows 7,
Formatted for a HP CP 1525 Laser Jet,
December 7th 2013, JBH